

Early Days

Dean built a small cabin on his new land to which he afterwards took his bride. This was in October of the year 1852, following a romance beginning on the old immigrant trail.

The trail led through Alturas in Modoc County to Pitt River and up to its source at the rim of volcanic rock that backed the waters of Lost River and formed what was later known as Tule Lake. This body of water covered the entire valley and reached to the higher land near Merrill and Malin.

It was around this body of water on the east side that the trail followed, crossing the river above Merrill and following a circuitous path over the mountains at Green Springs and down into the Rogue River Valley.

On this trail along the Pitt River, one immigrant train was attacked by Indians and members of the party were murdered. Wagons were attacked and burned.

In Jacksonville, when they heard that another train was following the one that ended in ghastly tragedy, a body of men quickly formed. They called themselves militia, and after electing officers, set out to go to the aid of this body of people.

Riding at the head of the column was N. C. Dean. As this column neared the place of the tragedy, he suddenly exclaimed, "Hey, fellas, see what I see?" "Yep, a woman," was the reply. "Yep, a young one, and I am going to make her my wife." This was before he had looked upon her face.

As he walked up to her, he asked, "What are you doing here?"

She said that she had picked up a book and had walked ahead of the train. When she became weary, she had sat down under the shade, reading and waiting for the wagon train to catch up.

Dean then said that they had come to protect and lead them to safety.

This young lady was Anna Houston and she was destined to be the first white woman to be married in Southern Oregon. The culmination of this meeting and the marriage of N. C. Dean and Anna Houston took place in October, 1852, some two months after their meeting in August. Capt. John Applegate of Applegate Valley acted as best man. The three Applegate brothers, John, Jesse and Lindsay, were to settle in Applegate Valley in the year of 1846, some four years before the gold rush of the 1850's.

Capt. Applegate was married four months after the first marriage and the tables turned with Dean acting as best man.

The first frame house in Southern Oregon was built on the Dean homestead. The glass for windows was carried in by pack train from either Crescent City, California, or Albany, Oregon.

Here was planted the first apple and peach trees.

A homestead at this time comprised a full section of 640 acres of land. A man and his wife were both entitled to file at this time. Dean acquired the two Houston's claims adjoining his land and together these claims comprised four square miles in the Willow Springs area.

Gold was discovered in the Houston's claims. The gold lay in the upper strata of the earth. Hundreds of Chinese worked this land and almost all of this gold was taken back to China.

In this period the Rogue River Indians and the Applegate Indians were mortal enemies. The Applegate Indians raided the lands of the Rogue River Indians.

An incident was when Chief Joseph of the Rogue River Indians, all bedecked in war paint and regalia, knocked at the door of the Deans, saying, "Me come, stay all night."

He was invited in and laid before a fireplace for warmth, and he slept through the night.

It was natural for the menfolk to sleep with their firearms. In the early morning hours, Chief Joseph laid his head close to the

floor. Suddenly he exclaimed, "You all right. Now wagon train she come."

Stepping out on the front porch, he gave an Indian call and from behind every conceivable hiding place his warriors arose. He then spoke, "Applegates come to attack you last night. Me come. Give 'em fight."

Both tribes, the Rogue River and the Applegates were given over to stealing, raiding and killing.

At one time as many as 14 fires consisting of hay stacks, out buildings and cabins were seen burning.

Some few miles from Gold Hill and on the old trail two prospectors shot across the river, wounding a squaw. Three Indians started out to avenge this crime. Following the trail, footsteps were

seen to cross a trail of the two others. In error, they picked up the trail of two people on their way to Jacksonville and the two guilty prospectors proceeded up the Rogue.

These two camped on what is known as the Spring branch back of the Dean dwelling. Dean spent the evening talking to these two men. After bidding them good night, he was opening the kitchen door of his home, when he heard the crack of rifles. Suspecting what had taken place, and grabbing up the guns, the men rushed to what was the seat of the crime. The two men were found dead and scalped.

The news of these killings reached Jacksonville. Men were forming a posse to attack the

Rogue River Indians.

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